

REFERENCES

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John Harpum, St. Paul's College, Cheltenham, U.K.

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BUILDING OF ONE NEST BY TWO MALE REICHENOW'S WEAVERS In the late afternoon of 22 April 1978 in the gardens of the New Ainsworth Hotel, Nairobi, I watched two male Reichenow's Weavers *Ploceus baglafect reichenowi* starting a nest in a *Grevillea* tree. Both males were seen sitting together at the same time in the nest start, then a crescent or inverted arch. Repeatedly, one bird would build while the other sat nearby. Several times one male would begin to build immediately after the other male stopped building. Within two hours the brood chamber was begun by weaving out from the initial crescent before any top or roof had been added. While the males were building, the female visited only a completed nest in an adjacent tree about 2 m below the new nest the males were constructing. She repeatedly entered and left this nest, remaining inside for 2 to 10 min at a time. She was not seen to take part in the construction of the new nest.

Early next morning both males worked steadily on the new nest, now nearing completion as viewed from the outside. One male was nearly always inside the nest, often while the second male waited nearby with a strip of grass leaf in its bill. The males would weave with grass leaves that were usually split part way. Occasionally, the males carried *Grevillea* leaves inside the nest. By 18:00 hrs on 24 April the nest walls were now much thickened and the nest had been built, essentially to completion, within two days. Meanwhile, as during the two preceding days, the female came and went from her brood nest nearby, and was not seen to weave any of the new nest. The female may add lining material, since at another nest a female was seen to enter with a bit of plant down in her beak.

Communal nest-building, involving more than one male, has been described for certain species of *Malimbus* (Brosset 1974) which have large and elaborate nests, but seems not to have been described before for other species of the true weaverbirds (sub-family Ploceinae). The role of cooperative building of the same nest by more than one male is conjectural. Presumably it speeds up the rate of building and makes more nests available sooner for a breeding group.

REFERENCE

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N.E. Collias, University of California, Los Angeles, Ca 90024, U.S.A.
and Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Ca 90007, U.S.A.

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